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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 18th MEETING OF THE
OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 1 February 2010

Opening session

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the development of co-operation in the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE, in particular in the area of transport.

In the modern world, transport, along with energy, is the fundamental “circulatory system” of any country. It is crucial to trade and economic progress, stability and security.

The subject of the present OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum is therefore highly topical and, I am sure, is in line with the interests and priorities of all participating States.

Improving the effectiveness of international road transport at a time of global economic crisis, good governance in customs and at border crossings, regional co-operation in the transport sector and access to ports for landlocked countries are issues that deserve detailed attention and targeted action.

Today’s meeting offers us all a good opportunity to exchange experience and “best practices” in the transport sector and to attempt to define the role that the OSCE can play in resolving transport problems.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus, which has common borders with the European Union on one side and Russia on the other and is a member of the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Community, pays great attention as an important transit country to the development of transport corridors and assuring safe and reliable transit.

Transit freight and passenger transport in Belarus currently takes place on international transit corridors II and IX.

We are working to improve transport communications and information systems, border crossing points, technical roadside services and consumer services for travellers.

At the same time, Belarus does not itself have access to the sea, which inevitably creates certain difficulties with respect to trade and economic development.

We believe that the OSCE could provide political and expert support in the implementation of regional projects to create new transport corridors in the Organization's area of responsibility and also to extend the pan-European transport corridors eastwards and the Asian transit system westwards.

In conclusion I should like to wish all participants a successful and interesting meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.